

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, August 24, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Joyce Evans
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Clay Griner

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

INVOCATION

Commissioner Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 9, 2021 and the regular session of August 10, 2021. No changes to the minutes were requested. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Beer, Wine, and Liquor License - Damian Hari of Ansuya Hari, LLC., DBA South Lowndes Bottle Store - 5120 Jewell Futch Rd., Lake Park, GA, Finance Director, Stephanie Black presented the item. Ms. Black stated this request is for beer, wine, and liquor for consumption off premise. She further stated this is a new establishment, but it was previously a Taco Bell location that has been closed for some time. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Beer and Wine License - Damian Hari of Ramjidada Properties, LLC., DBA Bigfoot - 6872 Lake Park Bellville Rd., Lake Park, GA, Finance Director, Stephanie Black presented the item. Ms. Black stated this is a request for beer and wine for consumption off premise. Ms. Black further stated this is a new establishment and the previous establishment has been closed since 2015. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of Easement Documents for Hightower Road, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated as part of the TIA-03 Hightower Road and Cooper Road NE project, Lowndes County has been working with Moody Air Force Base to acquire 3.038 acres of right of way. Mr. McLeod stated, in lieu of the right of way, Moody Airforce Base is going to grant an easement for Lowndes County to complete the project. Mr. McLeod further stated, they will grant the right of way at the end of the project. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the easement agreement with the United States of America and approve the Chairman to sign the easement, Vice Chairman Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of Lease Amendment Number Three to Bellsouth Telecommunications, LLC, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item, stating this is an easement that has been in effect with Bellsouth since 1981. Mr. McLeod further stated, they are proposing lease amendment number three, which will begin November 1, 2021, for five years, at a yearly rate of \$2,520.00. Commissioner Orenstein asked if this is only a land lease, Mr. McLeod responded that is correct. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve lease amendment number three as presented and approve the Chairman to sign the lease, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adopt Resolution Accepting Infrastructure for Val Del Estates Subdivision Phase I, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item stating, this is the resolution for Val Del Estates Subdivision Phase I, located off of Val Del Road. Mr. McLeod stated the project is substantially complete. Mr. McLeod further stated staff provided a punch list of items to be addressed to the contractor and as of today the punch list is completed and the resolution is ready to be approved and signed. Commissioner Orenstein asked County Manager, Paige Dukes if she is ok with the County taking action on this item, Mrs. Dukes replied yes, we are confident, and thanked Commissioner Orenstein for asking. Commissioner Griner made a motion to adopt the resolution, Vice Chairman Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adding Dispatch Consoles 11 and 12 for the 911 Center, 911 Director, Danny Weeks presented the item. Mr. Weeks stated, this request is for radio equipment to finish the last two consoles, 11 and 12, at the 911 Center to make them fully functioning dispatch positions. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve the purchase in the amount of \$155,697.00, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Alapaha Plantation Proposed Consent Order for Water, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated, trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids continue to be a problem at Lake Alapaha, due to naturally occurring organics in the aquifer. He further stated after several meetings and discussions with staff, Lovell Engineering, and the EPD district office out of Albany, nano-filtration was deemed to be the best option to remove the organics and meet the permit requirements. In addition, Mr. Stalvey stated, as part of the process, EPD has issued a proposed consent order for the nano-filtration pilot study. He also stated staff recommends approval and to authorize the Chairman to sign the proposed consent order. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Whitewater Road Manhole Emergency Repair, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated a manhole near the Whitewater Road lift station collapsed and was deemed an emergency repair by staff. Mr. Stalvey further stated, that they asked three contractors to come out to the site to look at the manhole, but only James Warren and Associates and Radney Plumbing, Inc. met with staff at the site to discuss repair options. Staff sent an RFP to both contractors for the emergency repairs and staff recommends approving the RFP submitted by RPI for the base bid amount of \$162,308.45. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve RPI, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Mud Swamp Road and Swamp Edge Drive Private Road Dedication Advisement, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item stating, as of August 16, 2021, staff has received a petition with all the signatures for Mud Swamp Road and Swamp Edge Drive. Mr. McLeod further stated it is now up to staff to advise the Board of Commissioners of the proposed dedication and the Board will provide the County Manager with direction as far as a resolution. Mr. McLeod added, this is not adopting the roads into the road inventory at this time, this is only giving direction to do quit claim deeds and plats. Commissioner Wisenbaker mentioned that this is only a portion of Swamp Edge Drive. Mr. McLeod responded it is three tenths of a mile. Chairman Slaughter stated that he would like a motion that would give the County Manager the direction to prepare the surveys for the right of ways as well as the quit claim deeds from adjoining properties. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to give the County Manager the direction to prepare the surveys for the right of ways as well as the quit claim deeds from adjoining properties, Vice Chairman Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Proposed Sale of County Real Property to Industrial Authority, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Industrial Authority desires to buy 2.5 acres of property on Gil Harbin Industrial Boulevard from Lowndes County for \$75,000.00. Mr. McLeod further stated the County does not have to bid this item because the Industrial Authority is another body politic. Staff recommends authorization of the sale of the subject 2.5 acre parcel to the Industrial Authority for \$75,000.00. Commissioner Griner made a motion to authorize the sale of the subject 2.5 acre parcel to the Industrial Authority for \$75,000.00, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adoption of the Millage Rate, Finance Director, Stephanie Black presented the item. Ms. Black stated following the 5:00 p.m. public hearing, this item is to adopt the Maintenance and Operation (M & O) millage rate as proposed at 10.656 mills with 8.406 mills coming to the County, 1 mill for the Industrial Authority, and 1.25 mills for the Parks and Recreation Authority. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adopt the Countywide millage rate at 10.656 mills, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adoption of Unincorporated Fire Millage, Finance Director, Stephanie Black presented the item. Ms. Black stated this item is for the unincorporated fire millage for a special district that is made up of the unincorporated area and is used to fund fire services. Ms. Black further stated, based on the unincorporated digest, the unincorporated fire millage would need to be set at 2.5 mills for 2021. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to not adopt the fire millage. There was no second motion. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adopt the unincorporated fire millage rate at 2.50 mills, Commissioner Griner second. Vice Chairman Evans, and Commissioners Orenstein, Marshall, and Griner all voted in favor, Commissioner Wisenbaker opposed. Motion carried.

BID

TIA-03 Hightower Road and Cooper Road NE, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated this item is for the TIA03 Hightower Road and Cooper Road NE grading, drainage, base, and paving project. Mr. McLeod further stated that staff received two bids, with the Scruggs Company being the low bidder at \$2,775,068.91. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the Scruggs Company as the low bidder and approve the Chairman to sign the contract, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes thanked the Commission for their direction and moving forward with the Mudswamp Road and Swamp Edge Drive process. Mrs. Dukes also thanked the citizens for their help, being at the meeting, and sticking with the County through the process.

Mrs. Dukes congratulated Commissioner Orenstein who is Vice Chair of the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). Mrs. Dukes stated Commissioner Orenstein chaired his first meeting and that it certainly puts the County on the map at state level. She further thanked Commissioner Orenstein for his leadership.

Mrs. Dukes requested a Special Called Meeting for Monday, August 30, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. to consider the County's ARPA match on the Carter & Sloope project. She further stated that she provided the commission with a punch list of projects that Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey is working with Carter & Sloope on related to water and sewer expansion. This is grant funding that the State is offering with their ARPA Funds, and the County can use our ARPA Funds as a match. Mr. Stalvey has received Carter and Sloope's proposal, which will be sent to the commission. Mrs. Dukes stated that, due to the August 31, 2021 deadline, we will need to hold a Special Called Meeting on Monday to consider the grant.

Mrs. Dukes provided a COVID update for Lowndes county stating, Leadership Lowndes was not able to have their Health and Human Services Day last Thursday in the community due to social distancing and our COVID numbers; however, EMA Director, Ashley Tye offered the EOC which allowed them to virtually and in a socially distanced manner, bring speakers in. Mrs. Dukes went on to say that it was very timely that Leadership Lowndes Leaders were able to receive the information regarding Health and Human Services. Mrs. Dukes thanked Mr. Tye for his efforts in making it happen and Public Information Officer, Meghan Barwick for setting the date.

Mrs. Dukes stated the next vaccine clinic that is scheduled on site for Lowndes County employees is September 2, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Dukes stated that there are 38 slots and they are hopeful that County employees will fill those slots, but if they do not, those slots will be opened up to the public.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD -

Carl Kimmons, 2862 Swamp Edge Drive thanked the Commission for their help in the process and moving it forward. Mr. Kimmons stated they spent about 30 hours this past weekend reconstructing the existing mess that was there so that they could have a path. Mr. Kimmons further stated that the

last time he heard, there was potential for the County to get something put in the road to make it stable so that they can continue to work during the process of the County taking it over and he has not heard anything regarding this situation. He went on to say that it is no longer raining, the majority of the water is gone, there is a path, and there is a good foundation for the County to bring in dirt. County Manager, Paige Dukes responded, we needed it to dry and we also needed the Commission to take official action tonight which puts us legally on that path. She further stated it was already planned for staff to go out to the area this week to take a look at what the County can do so that if there is a tremendous amount of rain again, it does not wash out all of your good work and so that you all are not stranded again. Mrs. Dukes went on to say that it will take a little time for the surveyor to prepare the plat and the attorneys to prepare the right of way deeds. Mrs. Dukes stated we can schedule a time for you all to sign the right of way deeds. Mrs. Dukes further stated there is an additional legal signature that is needed in order to be able to move forward. Mr. Kimmons thanked Mrs. Dukes and the Commission and asked about the dirt for the road and Mrs. Dukes responded, that is what staff will come out to look at this week to see what can be done.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Orenstein stated he did not know Chief Guyton very well nor does he know what his vision was for Lowndes County Fire Rescue, but he thinks that EMA Director Ashley Tye recognized that what we were doing a few years ago was not going to sustain and that we had to make changes. He further stated that he could not be more proud of the transition to Chief Green, Gary Williams, Terry Parsons, and the whole crew. Commissioner Orenstein went on to say that it seems like every day they hear more positive comments from the public and internally about what is going on under Mrs. Dukes' and Chief Green's leadership. Commissioner Orenstein added that he is proud of the group that saw the need and took it to the next level and provided the citizens what they need in our community. He also stated he could not be more proud of the direction the Fire Department is going, as well as EMA, and 911.

Chairman Slaughter stated he agrees with Commissioner Orenstein. He further stated that the direction taken to support the expansion of fire services in Lowndes County is a historical moment. Chairman Slaughter went on to say that when the Census numbers are out, you will be surprised at how much the unincorporated areas of Lowndes County are growing. He stated that it puts a lot of pressure on the Commission and staff to make sure that things are in place to support the growth and provide the services that the growth is going to call for. In addition, Chairman Slaughter stated that this is a step forward and thanked the Commission again for their decision. Commissioner Wisenbaker stated we do not ever need to forget about the tax payers. He further stated this puts a hardship on some people and he thinks that it is premature to make the decision. Commissioner Griner stated he thinks they moved in the right direction from a fire rescue standpoint.

Commissioner Griner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairman Evans, second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular session meeting at 6:00 p.m.